



A Caribbean Retreat

Just the pictures of Jon and Melody Dill's home in Anguilla make you yearn to be there. The couple combed the world in search of the "perfect beach" and landed on these Caribbean shores where they created their fantasy home - a place that exudes warmth, beauty and a quiet sense of days gone by.

Jon and Melody Dill are both avid travellers who met whilst working for the US State Department. Together, they combed the world from coast to coast in search of the “perfect beach”. Their quest took them to the shores of Mexico, West Africa, Bali, Fiji and as far as Tahiti. It wasn’t until they landed on Anguilla’s shores that they found what they were looking for. “Anguilla has some of the most beautiful beaches in the world and the turquoise waters of the Caribbean are jaw dropping. Moreover, the lack of big hotels or cruise ships and the still present ambience of by-gone days warmed our hearts,” says Melody.

But the fact that they were foreign homeowners on this island in the pristine British West Indies presented its own challenges. “We had to submit references from the police, our bank and our church and needed to be interviewed by the Chief Minister of Anguilla prior to buying land.” The couple recalls. And of course the absence of local building materials and resources wouldn’t be much help. So the Dills enlisted the expert skills of international hotel and resort designers Wilson and Associates.

The site was exquisite: just a four minute walk to the beach, overlooking the islands of St. Barths and St. Martin, and the azure waters of Sandy Hill Bay. Once this site was selected, lead architect Guy Courtney was brought in to work his design magic. His first trick was orientation, capitalizing on the tropical trade winds to cool off hot summer days and keep out insects. “One of the biggest challenges with this project, other than building on an island was the site design. The steepness of the slope made the development very tricky,” Courtney recalls. The result is a low rise resort style home seemingly perched atop a cliff, completely integrated into the terraced terrain.

“The design approach was inspired by Southeast Asian resorts, particularly Bali. The design of the space between the indoor and outdoor was of ▶



Previous Spread: Flexible lighting design and indirect lighting methods retain the mood of a starlit sky

This Spread: Tonya Burke selected the finest finishes to complement the Dills’ African and Oceanic artwork and Guy Courtney’s sweeping columnless architecture.



great importance,” explains Courtney. Architecturally, Jon and Melody’s home is a rhapsody of outdoor and indoor spaces all interconnected with a non-conventional approach to the corridor.

A meandering pool and manicured garden complete the holistic design. “The lagoon-style pools at Silky Oaks Lodge in Queensland inspired us, and although Anguilla is a desert island, we have created a lush, tropical landscape within the walls of the compound,” Melody points out with great pride her five-year labour of love. There are both indoors and outdoor living rooms, kitchens and dining rooms.

Each of the four bedrooms is designed as a separate en-suite pavilion and the master bedroom features a plunge pool. “I could spend an entire vacation in the master suite. It has its own swimming pool, a mini

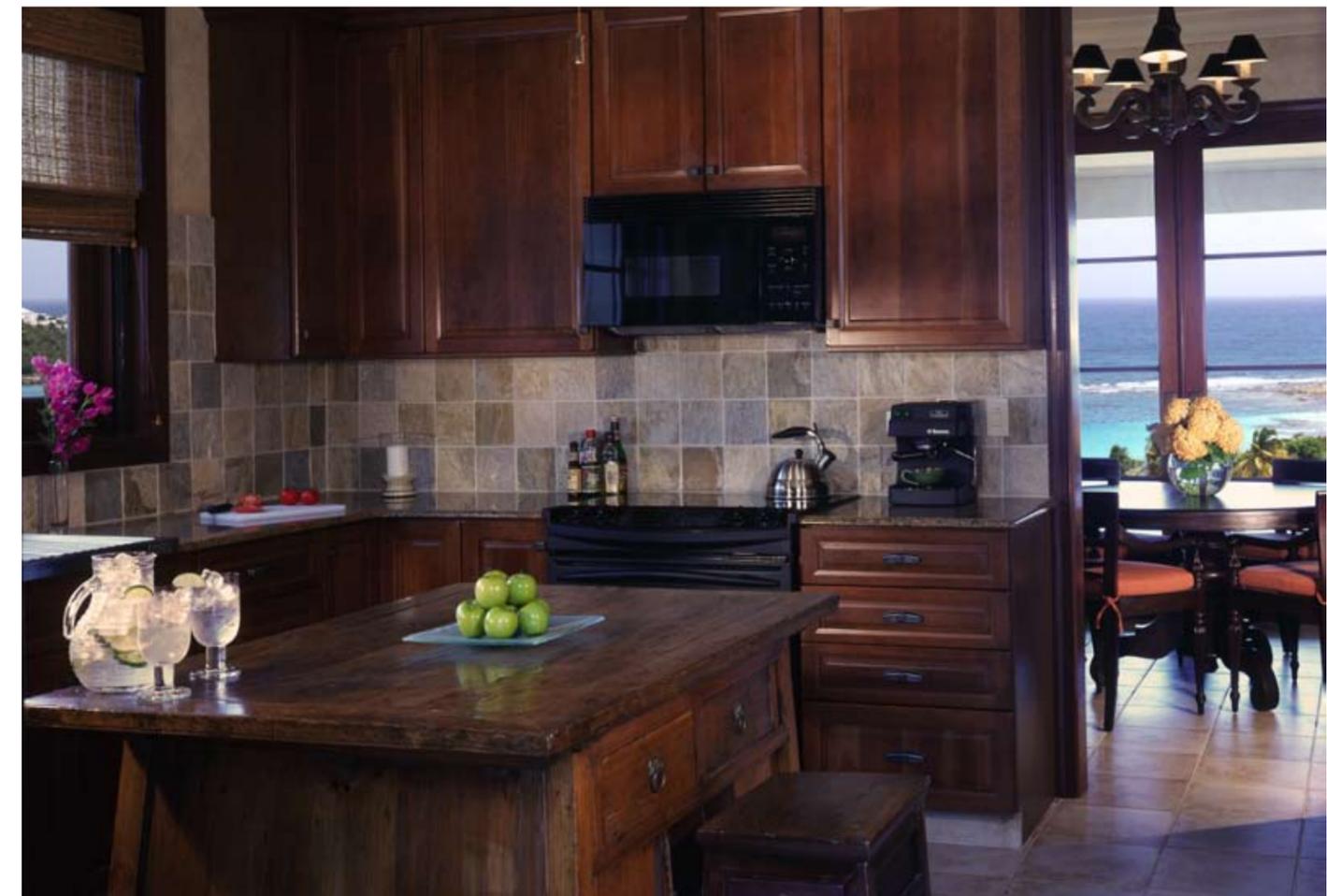
bar with refrigerator and coffee service, and an outside as well as inside shower, but the candle-rimmed bathtub is my favorite place to end the day. Two large windows swing open above the tub to make you feel as if you’re bathing in the garden,” adds Melody.

The main entertainment space, Jon’s favorite room, was created with minimal structural elements to profit from the stunning bay views. “One of my favorite aspects of the room is that the veranda in front of the living room is set at a level one metre below the floor, so the view of the sea is not cluttered by the backs of chairs and chaises,” he says.

While Guy Courtney was developing his unique architectural scheme, interior designer Tonya Burke took charge of the inside. She drew her design inspiration from the island’s Caribbean Environment.

Left: Tropical hardwoods and stone floor and wall finishes define the interiors of the dining area

Below: The indoor kitchen’s casework finishes match those of antique Javanese furniture that is omnipresent in the Dills’ home.



This spread: The master bedroom is classic and calm. Sweeping french doors open on to a private terrace with and the entire space is filled with a sense of sea, visible from all the windows.



“The Caribbean continues to be an abundant source of inspiration with intense contrast of light and colour as well as natural elements: sun, sky, sea, and sand,” she says.

Burke’s selection of materials was therefore centred on natural finishes such as teak wood, shell, stone, pebbles and natural island stone. “The colour and texture of the architectural materials and fabrics were kept neutral, drawing upon the natural rugged environment of Anguilla. This approach allows the colours of the sea and sky and outdoors to be the focal point,” Burke says

Furniture was oriented towards the bay allowing residents to wake up to sweeping sea views, and hand-oiled and textured to give a slight suggestion of antiquity. While exotic furniture and accessories were sourced from as far as Indonesia and Mexico, comfort and serenity were key design elements.

“Dark mahogany wood, natural woven materials such as sea grass and cane were scattered between comfortable seating all covered in ivory canvas, slip-cover style, with various patterned and hand-embroidered toss pillows. I also used a heavy ivory sheer throughout to create beautiful >



Above: An outdoor living and dining space allows the Dills to entertain on temperate Anguilla nights



Above: Two large windows swing open above the candle-rimmed bathtub to make you feel as if you're bathing in the garden



romantic drapes for the island breeze to flow through,” says Burke.

The Dills’ prized collection of African and Oceanic art also played a pivotal role in the design of their home. “We collect artwork based on our appreciation of the cultures and people we meet, and have been collecting since the early 1980s. Every June in the last 10 years, we have visited a remote area of the world with our son and have been mesmerized by the unique, sometimes Stone Age, beliefs and ceremonies performed by the people living there,” the couple explains. While Jon has an affinity for primitive masks and carvings, Melody likes to collect vessels. Among the pieces on display are religious jewelry from around Africa, storyboards depicting village life in Papua New Guinea and a collection of masks and carving from the Solomon Islands.

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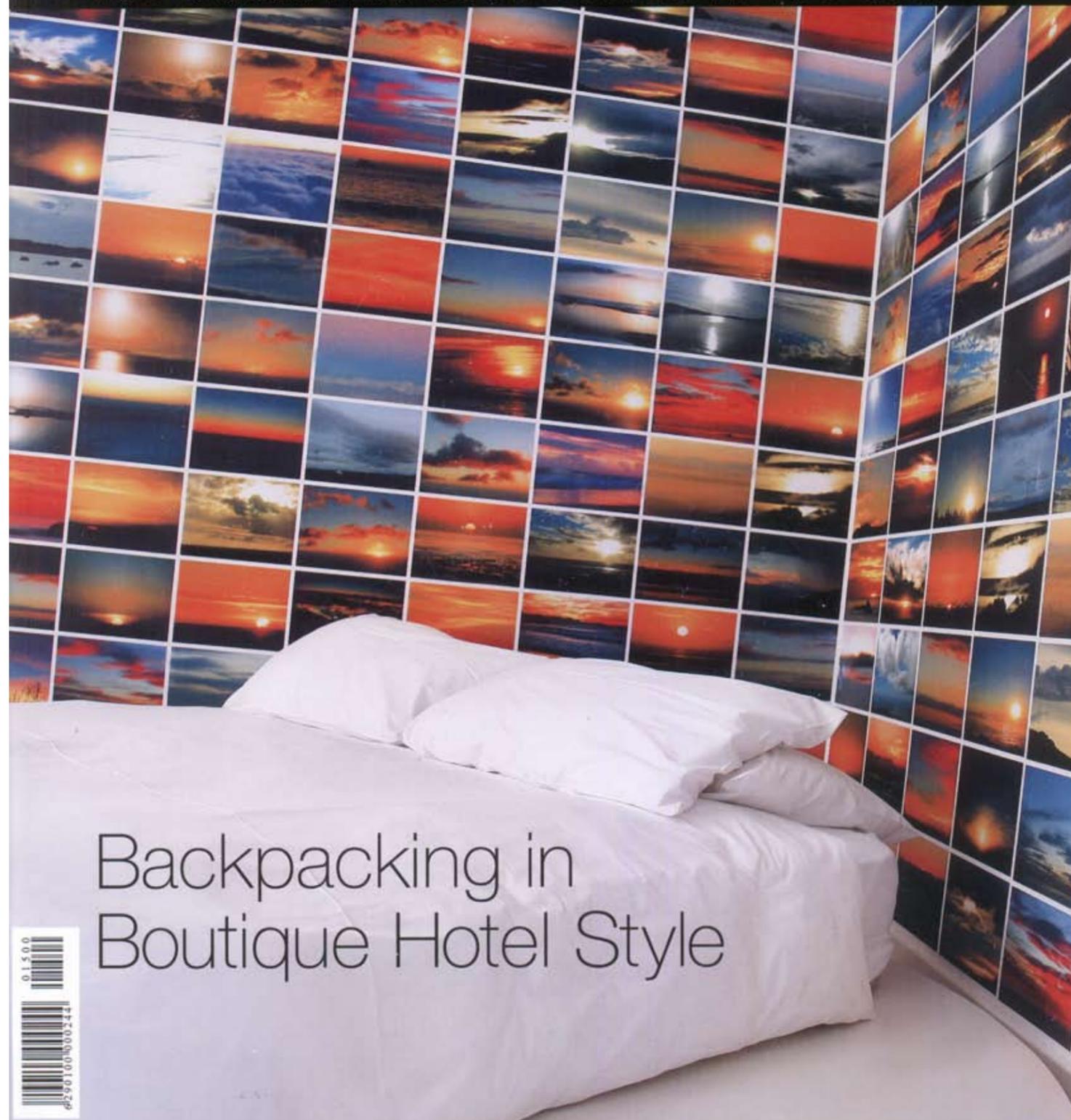
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